

# OLD KING COTTON

May be Unseated From His Monopolistic Throne.

## THE FINER RAMIE PLANT

Taken in Hands by Pittsburgh Capitalists, Who Propose to

## CHECK CHINESE COMPETITION.

Long Sought Machinery Found, and the Tremendous Venture

## FINALLY LAUNCHED IN THIS CITY

Preparations are at the present being perfected looking to the establishment of an industry in this country which promises to soon become second to none in the textile fiber culture, except that of cotton culture.

Many will recollect that a couple of years ago, the question of the culture and manufacture of the ramie plant was discussed at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, and that a number of well known citizens, prominently identified with trade and manufacture, became interested. The matter was talked of for some time, but finally died out, as it seemed, and nothing more was heard of it except that the people mentioned had formed a company.

That project has taken definite shape, and under a charter obtained in West Virginia, the incorporators, Messrs. Wm. M. Lyon, Paul H. Hack, President; Charles H. Humbert, Vice President; George R. Shible, Secretary, and John M. Tiersan, Treasurer, propose to go to work as fast as circumstances will permit and get the business started as soon as practicable.

They have secured land in Georgia for the cultivation of the ramie plant, and have secured the patent for the manufacture of the necessary machinery in the United States and Mexico.

## THE SOLUTION REACHED.

There has been no trouble in regard to the successful cultivation of the plant, but to get a machine that would separate the fiber has been, until lately, a seeming impossibility.

The patents they own have been tested successfully in England and France, and all that is needed now is the raw product and the buildings necessary for work, and it is the intention to establish factories in various parts of this country as soon as a supply of raw material can be grown. The charter has recently been obtained by Frank W. Smith, Esq., attorney for the incorporators.

The machine that separates the fiber is called a decorticator, but behind the name is a half million dollars, which form the power that set it in motion.

An idea of what machinery is capable of doing in this line may be obtained when it is considered what the Whitney cotton gin did toward making that staple king in the commercial world, for cotton was king, and the United States crop to be a failure for two years in succession, several bankruptcies would follow among civilized nations, and the Chinese would get the bulge on them.

## WHAT THE GIN DID FOR COTTON.

Before Whitney invented his gin a colored woman could only clean a pound of seed cotton a day. By the use of the gin and the standard amount of other steam power, 3,000 pounds a day can be cleaned, one machine doing the work of 3,000 women, representing a capital of \$5,000,000.

The die was cast, and the Chinese, who they "must go" anyhow, and they could not be much injured in consequence. Here is what is said of the competitor of the standard cotton, the finest produced in this country:

The name "ramie" is an East Indian one, and the plant produces the fiber called China grass. Its stem is a great variety of stems, and it grows both under cultivation and wild in nearly all tropical countries and Eastern Asia. It is a little, but has no stings. It is a native of the East, and grows four feet high, throwing up numerous stems as thick as the little finger, which have opposite, pointed, serrated leaves six inches long, for cotton seed, on long hairy petioles; their upper surface is dark green, but underneath they are covered with a very white down, suggesting the specific name, ramie, which makes the contrast between the two surfaces very marked.

From time immemorial the plant has been used in China and other Eastern countries in the manufacture of a great variety of fabrics, some as fine and brilliant as silk. The woven material has been an article of commerce for centuries, and in France and England has long been used as a substitute for or to mix with silk.

In warm countries three crops of stems are obtained in a year, the second affording the finest fiber. It is raised from seed, but the general method is to divide the old plants and plant very thickly in rows five feet apart. They must be planted in rows five feet apart, and the stems must be rich and well drained, and the plant will not stand hard frosts.

## HOW AN ISIN DOES IT.

In northern China the roots are lifted in the fall and kept in pits during the winter. The plant was introduced into Jamaica in 1854, and the natives were taught to use the boric garden at Washington, but no determined attempt was made to cultivate it until 1867. Then the Southern planters—having trouble with cotton, and seeing that the ramie plant was a great success, and having newly gotten its freedom, they head to it, and it was unstable—undertook the cultivation of ramie.

Plants were brought from Mexico, where it had been previously introduced, and the planters who raised plants for sale, made it profitable for a time, but when the manufacturing stage arrived, it was found impossible, or at least so considered, to separate the fiber by machinery and American hand labor, even at the low rate of Southern agricultural wages, could not compete with the Oriental, and the industry was "ruined by Chinese cheap labor." Various machines were invented and tried, but to no purpose, and the business fell stillborn, except that the plant propagators had made money, as did the importers of Chinese chickens about 35 years ago.

As in the latitude of Georgia three crops of stems a year can be harvested, the manufacture can be put in full blast about as soon as the buildings and machinery can be put up, and the United States can have a monopoly, as it has in cotton, until the Southern hemisphere is settled and developed, for the cotton belt, which is also the ramie belt, running around the northern half of the globe, is more extensive in the United States than in the corresponding part of the Eastern hemisphere. The culture of ramie is less expensive than that of the cotton plant, and only the cost of separating the fiber has hitherto stood in the way of its development.

## A Tough Customer.

Deputy United States Marshal McDonald arrested Robert Armstrong on Wylie avenue last night for passing a counterfeit 50-cent piece on B. K. O'Dew. Armstrong is supposed to be connected with the Butler county gang. He made a desperate resistance, and broke the officer's thumb.

## NO WONDER THEY KICK.

Honest Freight Shippers Object to Shodding the Sins of Others—Lower Classification Must Enforce.

The Pittsburgh Committee of Freight Agents held another meeting yesterday morning to consider the petition of the glass manufacturers of this city for a reduction in the classification of bottles and other articles of glassware.

After wrangling with the question all morning they adjourned without doing anything definite.

Nearly all of the agents are disposed to reduce the classification and would recommend the reduction if they could see any way to protect themselves from the practices of dishonest shippers. A great many of those formerly shipping table ware made the shipping orders read "bottles," which took a lower class. The practice became so universal and the railroad companies lost so much money that in order to save themselves they took bottles out of the fifth class and made them fourth. The less than car loads they advanced them from third to second class.

The shippers who did not misrepresent their goods naturally objected to paying a higher rate because their competitors were dishonest, and filed a petition to that effect.

If the change is made it would necessitate a universal change all over the country.

## IT WILL RAISE A HOWL.

Kissing said to be Going Out of Fashion Because of These Hatings.

Men have often remarked on the fertility of a woman's mind. Physiologists declare she never reasons, but as an instinctive creature she often reaches a correct conclusion much quicker than a man. If they lack the intricate process of tautologizing they have the happy faculty of walking straight through difficulties like a somnambulist in sleep.

The fellows who discuss in "Marriage a Failure" or "Why I Am a Bachelor" have never married like most women, for their cute noses with handkerchiefs since the advent of the new fangled veil. It covers the greater part of the face, and is as ornamental as possible.

It was evident they hadn't seen each other for some time, and they rushed together in a warm embrace. The inevitable kiss came next. Bess essayed the attempt, but the veil rendered it impossible. Quick as a flash one of the ladies turned the side of her face to her companion, and the latter smacked a spot on her cheek somewhere below the eye. This was satisfactory, and then followed the usual storm of quick womanly ejaculations.

"Kissing on the lips no longer fashionable," queried a reporter of a lady he met after this event.

"No, not since the introduction of the new veil," she answered sweetly. "You see the lips are completely covered, and it has become the fashion to press the lips against the cheek. This thing of kissing is a nuisance anyhow, and I wish the ladies would all stop it."

## ANOTHER LARGE PURCHASE.

The Standard Oil Company Now Owns Nearly All the Lima Territory.

The Standard Oil Company made another important purchase of oil land Wednesday, and the deal was consummated yesterday.

They are now in the exclusive possession of all the Lima territory.

For some time past they have been quietly buying up everything they could get their hands on in the Lima field. On Wednesday they purchased the last of what was owned by Joshua Rhodes and Captain J. J. Van-dergift, of this city. The sum paid for the last lot was about \$175,000. The Standard Company now owns about 40,000 acres in the territory. They have moved a great many of their largest tanks from the Bradford district to the Lima field. They are prepared to store all the oil until it can be piped to Chicago, where it is used as fuel.

## HOW MUCH HE WILL LOSE.

Mr. Guckenheimer Calls Down Dr. Thompson, the Prohibitionist.

Dr. Thompson, of Freeport, stated at the Harrisburg Convention of Prohibitionists that Mr. Guckenheimer would convert his distilleries into tanneries if prohibition became law.

Mr. Guckenheimer denied that he ever made such a statement. He said his plant was large enough to make a dozen tanneries, but it could not be utilized for such a purpose. Besides, he had been making whisky for 25 years, and he is too old now to learn a new trade. He has spent \$500,000 in erecting and improving his plant, 80 per cent of which will be a total loss, he claimed, if prohibition became a law.

## WHO WILL HAVE THE HONOR?

Some Lively Bidding Expected for That Famous Silver Bell.

That noted silver bell, estimated as being worth nearly \$50, but which has received several hundred dollars' worth of newspaper advertising in a good cause, will be sold Monday, at 2:30, in the Chamber of Commerce rooms. It is on exhibition in Durbin's window, on Fifth avenue, where it will probably stay until its ultimate use as a paper weight for a lawyer, or perhaps held over the hospitable door of some local millionaire.

## VISITING STUDENTS.

Those From Cornell University Will Come to Pittsburgh Shortly.

The mechanical and electrical engineering students of the Cornell University will shortly visit Pittsburgh to make an inspection of the Pittsburgh industries generally and the Westinghouse Electric Works in particular.

The entire corps of students will be under the personal supervision of Dr. R. H. Thurston and Prof. Edward Nichols.

The students will make a study of the electric plant, and only the cost of separating the fiber has hitherto stood in the way of its development.

## RUN OVER BY THE TRACTION.

A Young Boy May Lose a Leg Run Over by a Traction Car.

A boy about 10 years of age, named Grenard, the adopted son of Mr. Louis Miller, of Ligonier street, Lawrenceville, had his right thigh crushed yesterday about 5 o'clock.

He was trying to jump on a traction car, near Fifth-sixth street. Dr. Clark stated that amputation may be necessary.

## BOKERS IN DEMAND.

Southside Livermen Can't Supply Enough for the Parade.

To judge from the demand for horses on the Southside to-day's parade will be a large one. Every liverman seen last night reported all horses engaged and a demand for more.

As high as \$9.00 is asked for a horse for the day, and some of the livermen were offering \$1.00 last night for the use of a saddle.

## Too Nick for a Doctor.

A fellow representing himself as a member of the firm of Arbuckle & Co. went into Dr. Hanna's office yesterday. He managed to capture a new pair of gloves and a revolver, when he said he would call again. W. H. Adamson was arrested last night on suspicion.

## Presented With a Saber.

The Hibernian Rifles presented Major Coyne last night with a fine saber and belt. Adjutant Cornelius Horgan made the presentation speech and Major Coyne responded. He will wear the sword for the first time in the parade to-day.

## DIGGERS IN DISTRESS.

Miners Compelled to Work at Low Wages on the Punch Out System.

ONLY 50 CENTS CASH IN A YEAR.

A Leading Knight's Interesting Talk on the Child Labor Question.

## SECRETARY DILLON IS A BENEVOLECT

Several West Virginia coal miners passed through the city yesterday on their way to the Eastern coal-fields, where they will try to secure employment.

They are disgusted with the condition of affairs in the State they have just left, and one of them told the diggers in some sections were being imposed upon by the operators.

"The region I left," said he, "is one of the worst in the State. The men seldom receive any money, taking their pay in 'punch-outs,' that is, tickets calling for a certain amount at the company stores.

"These tickets are only good at the stores owned by their employer. If a man buys 10 cents worth of bread, that amount is punched out of his tickets. The other merchants will accept the tickets at a reduction of 25 per cent. The only money the men received while I was working there was 50 cents last Christmas, which the employers called Christmas money."

A Pittsburgh labor leader who is well acquainted with the affairs in that State, corroborated the miner's statement. He said the miners down there are very hard class to organize, and this is the only way to ameliorate their condition. State President Moran, of the Miners National Protective Union, is doing good work in that section. When the men are thoroughly organized they will take steps toward abolishing the punch-out system.

This will greatly benefit the river miners in this section, as the West Virginia miners are their strongest competitors in the Southern markets.

## THE CHILD LABOR BILL.

Pittsburgh Workers Condemn the Action of Ohio Glass Workers.

The defeat of the child labor bill in the Ohio Legislature has caused much adverse comment among labor leaders here. Mr. John Ehnman, of the Ohio Valley Budget, in speaking of the measure yesterday, said:

"I attribute the defeat of the bill to the combined opposition of manufacturers and glass workers. I am surprised at the stand taken by the workers against the measure. They claim, however, that if it was passed Ohio manufacturers would be unable to compete with manufacturers outside of the State, and they would be compelled to seek employment elsewhere.

The statement that boys are taken from orphan asylums and are sent to work in glass factories is incorrect. I have visited the factories at Findlay and Fostoria, and know that boys only receive their board and clothes for 25 cents a week, after having served that time receive \$1 a week extra.

"In order to prevent the employment of boys and children in glass factories, I would suggest a tax similar to the one imposed on foreigners who obtain employment in this country. If a man was made under such circumstances a bank would be forced by circumstances to take care of him, and the element of faith enters largely into all business transactions, and this is what saves the employment of boys in glass factories. The element of faith enters largely into all business transactions, and this is what saves the employment of boys in glass factories.

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